Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-16 remain in the application. Claims 4 and 13 have been amended.

In item 1 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 4 and 13 have been objected to because of certain informalities.

Specifically, the Examiner has stated that claims 4 and 13 do not recite language that sufficiently connects conceptual ideas, such as "method steps" with a physical apparatus such as a "storage device". Claims 3 and 14 have been amended so as to further clarify the claims. Therefore, the objection to claims 4 and 13 is believed to have been overcome.

Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic or clarificatory reasons. The changes are not provided for overcoming the prior art nor for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In item 3 on page 3 of the Office action, claims 1-16 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Morris et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,764, 900) (hereinafter "Morris") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

The rejection is based on the disclosure found in column 6, lines 34-51 of Morris. An electrical signal containing an acoustic signal can be considered an output signal. However, contrary to the Examiner's position, applicant does not agree that the Morris reference discloses that an output mode can be switched on or off. The Examiner emphasizes the wording "if and then" stating that "if client computer A active sound buffer 420 stores a first message packet, then client computer A enhancement routines 530 can examine the source addresses of the message packets." The Examiner continues to state that "the acoustic (or output) signal will only be output to client computer A if the enhancement routines are in effect." However, the Morris reference does not disclose anything about the possibility of switching on or off any enhancement

routines, because the signal enhancement routines are always in effect. Of course there is no output signal if there is no data in the corresponding buffer storage. But if there no data in the buffer storage, there is also no output signal, which means that no choice is provided to switch the output signal on or off, because in order to achieve this the output signal must at least be produced and available. If the buffer storage of Morris is empty, no output signal is produced at all.

It is the Examiner's position that the enhancement routines must first check whether or not the sound buffers store any message packet, but the Examiner's position appears to be based on a misunderstanding. The enhancement routines do not have to check if there is anything stored in the buffer because the content of the buffer is always processed by the enhancement routines.

Claims 1 and 9 of the instant application explicitly recite checking whether an output mode is switched on, and outputting the output signal only if the output mode is switched on. The difference between the present invention as claimed and Morris can best be understood by the following comparison. The method disclosed by Morris includes receiving a sound signal and processing this sound signal through enhancement routines to the corresponding loudspeakers based upon the information

included in the acoustic signal. However, if an acoustic sound signal is provided by the corresponding source, the processing can't be stopped by switching an output mode on or off. According to the present invention as claimed, signals, such as error signals, are also constantly produced by a computer system, however, the signals are only output if the output mode is switched on. In the instant application, the output mode is a feature that offers a choice.

As seen from the above given comments, the reference does not show the control apparatus being configured to check whether an output mode is switched on, and to output the output signal if the output mode is switched on, as recited in claims 1 and 9 of the instant application.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 or 9. Claims 1 and 9 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 9, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-16 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner & Greenberg P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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For Applicant(s)

AKD:cgm

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